

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/01/10 : CIA-RDP80-00809A000600150123-8

S-E-C-R-E-T

50X1-HUM

Since 12 October 1952 the Sofia area has been disturbed by the recall of a large number of reservists from Sofia and vicinity. The first recalls occurred on the night of 12 October 1952, and the people of Sofia, who are not accustomed to being roused at night except by the State Security Police, believed that arrests were being made.

The first moments of fear were followed by the belief that something very serious awaited them because Sofia had never seen so many reservists recalled at one time or so hastily. Some reservists, especially those from the villages, were accompanied by members of their families, as if they expected to leave directly for the front.

The total number of persons recalled cannot be estimated, but there were certainly several thousand within several days and nights. The recalls generally took place after midnight. Communist Party members had to report within 1 hour, and other persons within 6 hours. The Communists were probably organized before the others to insure that a cadre of the faithful would surround the others who were mobilized.

All persons who were recalled had to report between 0300 and 0800 hours to the military authorities, who were waiting for them in the various Sofia schools. Students had previously been given a 3-day vacation. Equipped and equipped on the spot, the reservists were sent by truck into an area probably near Sofia to form their units. They were not told beforehand where they were going.

A rumor circulated to the effect that all reservists from the class of 1910 (42 years old) on were to be mobilized. It was also reported that the 1st and 6th regiments of the 1st Division in Sofia would be organized. These rumors could not be verified.

Although the region around Sofia was disturbed by the recall, other sections of Bulgaria apparently were not affected by recalls. Although the number of persons recalled was large, it constituted only a minority of Sofia's 600,000 inhabitants. Necessary arrangements had been made in May which would permit partial (regional) trial mobilizations during 1952.

Since some operations of this type had taken place in 1951 in Plovdiv, Kolarovgrad, and Dobrudzha, it seems to me that this is only a repetition of these maneuvers to test the efficacy of the mobilization system.

The Bulgarian Army apparently did not carry on maneuvers during September 1952. This does not appear normal in view of the fact that Bulgaria has 7 million inhabitants with 250,000 men under arms. It is, therefore, possible that the present recall may be connected with fall maneuvers.

50X1-HUM

- 2 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

50X1-HUM

Certain sections of classes rather than entire classes have been recalled. The oldest class to be called is reportedly the class of 1910. Unconfirmed reports state that three armies are being organized around Sofia, Plovdiv, and Pleven. Several hundred Soviet officers are said to have arrived to witness this trial mobilization. Bulgarian military authorities are said to have intended originally to hold only a trial mobilization lasting one week, but upon Soviet insistence they extended the period of instruction to 30 days.

According to some reservists who were recalled but were later released because of their health, the military authorities cordially welcomed the persons called up. The mobilization itself was well organized. During the first few days, the reservists received good rations and quarters and were supplied with free cigarettes. All are said to have been well-clothed. These reservists were impressed most of all by the speeches made by their commanders because they were full of patriotism and were very different from those to which the civilian population is subjected.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Sofia reservists who were called up between 12 and 16 October 1952 were released on 3, 4, and 5 November 1952, after having taken part in the maneuvers which were held between Vaharel and Ikhtiman on the Dragoman-Sofia-Svilengrad railroad, 50 kilometers from Sofia in the direction of Plovdiv.

In the course of these maneuvers, two "armies" opposed one another. One defended from the other the access to the road leading to Sofia. At the time of the maneuvers, the automobile route from Sofia to Plovdiv was blocked by soldiers, and access to the area was prohibited to civilians. However, train passengers on the same route could see some phases of the maneuvers of the two "armies" which took place not far from the railroad.

For the first 2 days, the concentration of troops in the area caused great congestion which held up the exercises.

- E N D -

- 3 -

S-E-C-R-E-T